



Welcome to Supporting Communities 212th Edition of E-Zine, bringing you Best Practice from the Community Sector; Funding and Training Updates and Policy Developments in Northern Ireland, Great Britain and Republic of Ireland

## The Housing Policy Panel Makes an Impression at Stormont!

The newly appointed Tenant Advocate and several Housing Policy Panel (HPP) members paid a visit to Parliament Buildings this week to meet with the [All-Party Group on Housing](#).

Patricia McQuillan, the chairperson for the HPP and Tenant Advocate for Northern Ireland, presented an overview of the Panel's work since its creation in 2017. She spoke about her new role and the importance of having a representative of the Tenants' voice at the table where decisions that affect them are being made.

Dave Maher, an HPP member representing Habinteg Housing Association Ulster, impressed upon the group the life-changing nature of social housing by telling his personal story of becoming a tenant. Two additional HPP members, Elishia Mullan (Clanmil Housing) and Pat Monteague (Ark Housing), were also in the gallery lending their support.



**HPP Members and Supporting Communities Staff at Stormont**

Supporting Communities, in our role as the Independent Tenant Organisation, has regularly convened the HPP since its inception, working with the members to develop their capacity to engage with decision-makers. Siobhan O'Neill, our Tenant Participation and Community Development Officer, provided the All-Party Group with a presentation on our role in ensuring the aims of the Tenant Participation Strategy for Northern Ireland (2015-2020) are met on behalf of the Department for Communities. She spoke about the need for an updated Strategy to enable us to take tenant participation to the next level.

### Independent Tenant Organisation

The Tenant Participation Strategy for NI (2015-2020) called for the establishment of an Independent Tenant Organisation (ITO).

Supporting Communities won the tender for this contract in 2017 and has since taken on responsibility for overseeing the implementation of the Strategy and supporting all social housing tenants and staff to develop the skills needed for effective participation.

Independent  
Tenant  
Organisation

### The Tenant Advocate Speaks to the All Party Group on Housing

The members of the All-Party Group were very interested in the presentations, thanking the tenants and staff for sharing their experiences. We have been invited to return to keep the group updated on our work and how the Executive can further our aims to put tenants at the heart of social housing.

Colm McDaid, CEO of Supporting Communities, remarked, "Today's meeting has been very positive and engaging. The Housing Policy Panel is a clear example of how tenants can influence housing-related matters strategically and in housing practice. We are delighted to support and work alongside these volunteers to make important changes and improvements to housing services in Northern Ireland.

Patricia McQuillan will speak on behalf of the HPP again on 13 June at the first-ever [All-Ireland Tenant Engagement Conference](#) on a panel with policymakers from the Department of Communities and the Housing Agency Ireland. This will be Supporting Communities' first large-scale conference, which will raise the profile and standard of tenant engagement for social housing tenants throughout the island of Ireland.



## House Condition Survey 2023 Begins

Field work for the latest Northern Ireland House Conditions Survey has begun.

Since 1974, the Housing Executive has conducted this major research project, examining the condition and energy efficiency of homes in both private and social housing sectors.

Although the survey is voluntary, householders are encouraged to allow entry to surveyors to complete their work, if requested. In turn, the information gathered as part of this field work is used as a guide for priorities for housing expenditure in the years ahead.

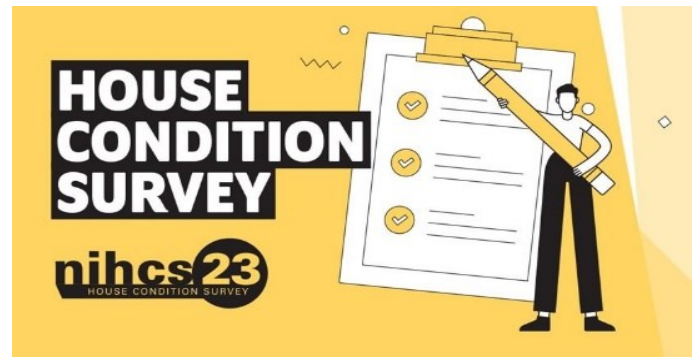
Ursula McNulty, Head of Research at the Housing Executive, explained; "Our House Conditions Survey is an incredibly important piece of work. It gives us an in-depth look at the current state of housing across NI.

"A representative sample of all types of housing is included in this research project and professionally trained housing surveyors are hitting the streets to conduct their inspections. We have a statutory duty to conduct this research and since the first House Conditions Survey, our local housing scene has been transformed.

"In 1974, one in every five homes here was classified as unfit for habitation. In Belfast, that figure rose to 25%.

"When results were released in 2016, levels of unfitness had dropped to around 2% - the lowest figure we have ever recorded.

"We would encourage householders to take the opportunity to engage with our surveyors as part of the process – feel free to ask any questions you may have



regarding the condition of your home or its energy efficiency standards.

"If your home has been selected, you will receive a letter in advance informing you of a visit from a surveyor who will have identification for you to check.

"It will only take an hour or so to complete the survey so disruption will be at a minimum.

"If you have not received a letter or the surveyor is unable to provide identification then you should refuse entry to anyone who may attempt to enter your property.

"All information is completely confidential – no individuals or households will be identified in the final report and a helpline has also been established to answer any questions you may have."

For more information, call the House Condition Survey Helpline on:  
tel.: [028 95 982548](tel:02895982548) or email: [nihcs@nihe.gov.uk](mailto:nihcs@nihe.gov.uk)

## Register with Social Value NI

Social Value is about maximising the social, economic and environmental benefits through the public procurement process. Ultimately, this allows Government Departments and their stakeholders to find new and far reaching methods to deliver on the outcomes of the Programme for Government.

<https://biteable.com/watch/3839349/057567cda04300a577b20688fe969067>

The Social Value NI website offers the public, private and third sectors a suite of bespoke resources, training modules and model procurement documentation to ensure consistency of approach while allowing public

bodies, and their suppliers, to retain flexibility in the delivery of the 4 social value themes:

- Increasing secure employment and skills
- Building ethical and resilient supply chains
- Delivering zero carbon
- Promoting Well-being

Your organisation may be able to benefit from contractors working in your area – all you have to do is register as a broker here: <https://socialvalueni.org/brokers/>



## Could you act as a critical friend to the Charity Commission?

Following the disruption of the Covid-19 pandemic the Commission is planning to update its critical friend list. A critical friend is supportive of the aims of the Commission but is also willing to provide honest and often candid feedback. Critical friends engage with the Commission during projects to bring their perspective to what is being planned and developed. They provide feedback on work such as draft guidance or new processes.

Critical friends will have a range of perspectives and expertise on charities and the charity sector or have specialist skills such as accountancy or law. Acting as a critical friend does not influence any application for

registration nor does it represent an endorsement from the Commission.



We would be grateful if you could bring this call for critical friends to the attention of your members, so that the Commission can draw on the combined insights of a broad range of people in the development of its processes and guidance.

Anyone who is interested and would like to find out more about what is involved, please contact [erin.gordon@charitycommissionni.org.uk](mailto:erin.gordon@charitycommissionni.org.uk)

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## 27 Awards for Northern Ireland's Best-Kept Beaches and Marinas

The local winners of the international Blue Flag Award and the UK-wide Seaside Award have been revealed for 2023.

Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful announced that 18 beaches and marinas at home earned the prestigious Blue Flag Award distinction after reaching world-class standards in criteria that includes water quality, safety, accessibility, cleanliness and environmental education.

A further nine beaches received Seaside Awards, the UK's mark of quality that ensures visitors are guaranteed to find a clean, safe, attractive and well-managed coastal stretch. Seven Seaside Award sites returned excellent water-quality results, while two more rated as good, the second highest classification in this area.

The benchmarks for blue spaces were shared across councils, with Causeway Coast and Glens claiming 12 awards and Mid and East Antrim landing three Blue Flags and three Seaside Awards.

There were also five flags for aquatic spots in Ards and North Down, and three wins for beaches in Newry, Mourne and Down. Ballyronan Marina in Mid Ulster retained its Blue Flag status for the 14<sup>th</sup> consecutive year.

Dr Ian Humphreys, CEO of Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful said:

"We are extremely pleased that 27 beaches and marinas have achieved either a Blue Flag Award or Seaside Award. Each flag is a symbol that these special places are managed to an excellent standard and an important trust signal to the public that they can expect a high-quality experience when they visit one of these award-winning sites.

"At a time when budgets are tight and difficult decisions are never far away, we want to thank councils and other organisations for continuing to invest in our beaches and marinas that are much loved and valued by tourists and people at home alike."



*Image via Keep NI Beautiful*

Owen Lyttle, DAERA's Director of Marine and Fisheries said "We are delighted to see so many beaches and marinas awarded for their excellent environmental management. The assessment of water quality is a core component of these Awards and highlights that Northern Ireland continues to have some of the cleanest beaches and marinas in the world. We will keep working with all those who help to manage these valuable blue spaces to ensure that Northern Ireland continues to have beaches and marinas we can be proud of."

Beach and marina operators and Mayors from across councils were invited to collect the awards at a presentation ceremony in The Arcadia, Portrush on 25 May. The occasion was organised by Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful, who manage the accreditations locally.

The award-winning locations will now have their respective flags in place for the duration of the Northern Ireland bathing season, which runs from 1st June to 15th September.

To see the full list of Blue Flag Award and Seaside Award winners, visit [www.keepnorthernirelandbeautiful.org](http://www.keepnorthernirelandbeautiful.org)



# Consultations

## Review of the Race Relations (NI) Order 1997

The Executive Office NI

[Consultation on the Review of the Race Relations \(NI\) Order 1997 | The Executive Office \(executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk\)](#)

Closing date; 18<sup>th</sup> June 2023

## Wildfires in NI, Draft Strategic Way Forward

Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs

[Consultation on Wildfires in Northern Ireland, Draft Strategic Way Forward | Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs \(daera-ni.gov.uk\)](#)

Closing date; 20<sup>th</sup> June 2023

## Draft Equality Action Plan 2023-2026

Department for Infrastructure

[Consultation on Section 75 Equality Action Plan 2023-2026 | Department for Infrastructure \(infrastructure-ni.gov.uk\)](#)

Closing date; 23rd June 2023

## Review of Regional Strategic Planning Policy in Renewable and Low Carbon Energy

Department for Infrastructure

[Review of Regional Strategic Planning Policy on Renewable and Low Carbon Energy - Public Consultation | Department for Infrastructure \(infrastructure-ni.gov.uk\)](#)

Closing date; 30th June 2023

## Housing Community Network Survey 2023

Housing Executive

<https://consultations.nidirect.gov.uk/nihe/housing-community-network-survey-2023>

Closing date; 30th June 2023

## Private Tenancies Act payment options

Department for Communities

[Consultation on Private Tenancies Act payment options | Department for Communities \(communities-ni.gov.uk\)](#)

Closing date; 17<sup>th</sup> July 2023



**YOUR VIEWS WANTED**


The Northern Ireland Policing Board is seeking views from across the community on the delivery of the policing service and how the police work in partnership with the community in local areas as part of the Community Policing Survey 2023.

With our responsibility to oversee the work of the Police Service of Northern Ireland, we want to find out about your experience of PSNI in your local area, whether that be as an individual or through your work with a community group or an organisation.

This information will be used to inform the Policing Plan and assist the Board in assessing and evaluating the impact of police partnership working within local communities. We appreciate you taking the time to complete this survey. The Board will publish the results in Autumn 2023.



**SCAN TO COMPLETE THE SURVEY**



The online survey will be open from **Monday 3 April 2023 to Friday 30 June 2023** and can be accessed by scanning the QR Code or by visiting [consultations.nidirect.gov.uk/doj/community-policing-survey-2023](https://consultations.nidirect.gov.uk/doj/community-policing-survey-2023)

Anyone unable to access the survey online, can request hard copies of the survey by contacting the Policing Board:

Northern Ireland Policing Board  
James House, Block D, 2 - 4 Cromac Avenue,  
The Gasworks, Belfast, BT7 2JA

Statistics@nipolicingboard.org.uk  
028 9040 8500

You can find out more about the role and work of the Policing Board by visiting our website at [www.nipolicingboard.org.uk](http://www.nipolicingboard.org.uk)

Stay up to date by following us on social media:

# Policy and Practice Focus

## A blueprint for Northern Ireland's Third Sector



[Nick Garbutt](#) writes in *Scope*

Northern Ireland now has a blueprint on how to unleash the potential of civil society to the benefit of all.

The Law Family Commission published a report back in January, which [Scope examined here](#), exploring how to get the public, private and social sectors firing on all cylinders to build truly inclusive growth.

It provided tangible ideas for policymakers, businesses, philanthropists and society to adopt in order to tackle the systemic challenges that are stopping civil society delivering on its potential. That report has now been supplemented by a follow-up specifically for Northern Ireland which recognises the unique challenges faced here. For its authors to acknowledge this, and to produce this companion report to reflect them, is both unusual and refreshing. It will be especially so to those working for UK-wide organisations who have become used to the deep sigh and rolling of eyes which are the default English response when differences are pointed out.

Here, as elsewhere, civil society plays a vital triple role. As the report states: “[B]ringing people together, campaigning to solve pressing problems, and providing services – particularly to those who are otherwise marginalised and overlooked. From improving health to peacebuilding and boosting economic growth, when it comes to achieving the changes that everyone agrees are needed, civil society is essential to each and every goal.” For all that, the report concludes, the sector does not have all the tools and the environment it needs to fulfil its full potential.

This will not come as a startling revelation to people involved with voluntary and community organisations given cutbacks, funding shortfalls and being forced into permanent crisis mode.

But the real strength in the report, and what makes it a must-read, is its calm and compelling analysis of what needs to be done to put things right. And to achieve that action is required not just from government but from business and charities themselves. It is measured, well-argued and seems achievable.

The Commission’s central argument is for strategic investment in the productivity of the social sector, the data available to and about it, and in the changes needed to unlock philanthropy. This to be

accompanied by a dramatic acceleration in the partnership between civil society and business, and advances in the relationship between civil society and government. In order for that to happen it will be necessary for there to be a greater understanding of the nature and role of civil society from both experts and the public.

Northern Ireland’s civil society is highly diverse, including small volunteer-run community groups and neighbourhood WhatsApp groups, as well as major providers of public services, especially in housing and social care.

Overall, there are more than 7,000 registered charities in Northern Ireland, employing nearly 54,000 people, 7% of the total workforce. And there is a high level of both trust and public involvement. Nearly three in ten (28%) people volunteer and nearly two-thirds (64.5%) donate to charity. Overall, 71% of people in Northern Ireland report trusting charities, 12% higher than in Great Britain, and 14% higher than in the Republic of Ireland. And as the report argues it combines some of the features of the other two sectors, which makes its role so distinctive. Like the public sector, it is concerned with providing public goods rather than generating profit. Like the private sector, it is dispersed, agile and driven by individuals and communities.

Per the report: “This combination of characteristics enables civil society to play multiple roles both in local communities and national life – spotting problems and opportunities; innovating to meet them; driving social change; enabling communities to take action to improve their area; and reaching groups often marginalised in both the political and commercial realms.” The sector quite clearly has unique strengths. The challenge is to harness them to the full.

And the Commission outlines what needs to be done.

First there would need to be an overhaul of the funding landscape. In practice this means funders need to make more long-term, flexible financing available more simply to the sector.

The short-term basis on which many grants are offered leads to uncertainty, leaving charities unable to plan for the future and is inefficient, forcing charities to expend valuable time and resources constantly reapplying for funding unnecessarily. As one contributor to the survey put it. “As a charity, you’re in an endless roundabout of tracking down funding, applying for it, evaluating it, reporting on it. It just goes on and on and on and on ... [During] the time that you should be working with the people, [which] you got involved with the charity to do, you end up getting stuck in this endless round of funding.”

There is also typically a lack of finance for long-term organisational growth and the tendency of much funding to come with stipulations restricting their use to narrowly conceived projects. Restrictive funds are more expensive to implement and difficult to manage, and they overlook the importance of investing over the long term in the skills and capacities an organisation needs to deliver these projects well in the first place for example salaries, rent, energy bills and a wide range of other costs which must be met for the charity to function, but which are all too often excluded from grant funding.

The sector in Northern Ireland also faces a further obstacle for which it requires help.

Better data to inform good decision-making is required both within the sector and among the funders and policymakers who influence it. This would involve working with the statistics body NISRA and the Charity Commission to develop a data strategy, and encouraging organisations to share more data they currently hold. The Commission also estimates that an additional £5 billion per year could be raised from public donations if the UK matched other leading countries, which would translate to an additional £31 million for charities in Northern Ireland. Linked to transforming funding is the need to improve the sector's productivity. The language of productivity is not often used in relation to charities, but it is vitally important to the whole sector. It is more common to discuss impact, effectiveness, performance or social value for charities, but these are all essentially describing the same thing as productivity – maximising an organisation's ability to achieve outcomes using the resources at their disposal.

Improving the productivity of charities is not about cutting costs, prioritising efficiency over quality or simply working harder. It is about increasing their ability to transform inputs into outcomes. Per the report: "The challenges facing charities mean it is more important than ever to make the best possible use of every available resource, with many facing rising demand, rising costs and falling real-terms incomes."

There is a close link between improving productivity and transforming how organisations are funded so that organisations end up with more time and resources to invest in their capacity and capabilities. This is especially true for smaller organisations where the same individual may be delivering services, fundraising, supporting other staff and volunteers,

while also responsible for developing strategy and identifying improvements. The report identifies four major factors in driving productivity within organisations: innovation, technology, management practices and people. Innovation, for example developing new services, processes, and products that can reduce costs or increase output or quality – can significantly boost productivity growth.

This is especially so when married to digital adoption, ranging from using advanced technology, such as artificial intelligence, to basic digital technologies, such as digital software for customer relationship management. And where charities are enabled to consider more transformative, long-term changes to overcome the challenges facing their communities, substantial change can happen. Funding for this sort of work is scarce. It shouldn't be. Charities are often highly innovative and creative, as was demonstrated by how so many adapted during the restrictions brought in during the Covid pandemic. But skills gaps, leadership issues and under-investment, and funders need to help fill those gaps.

The report also wants to see a transformation in the relationship between the sector and government. This would include a drive to increase public sector volunteering and secondments between sectors, and to ensure that formal structures, such as advisory groups, fully include and value the contribution of civil society representatives.

There is also much to be achieved through partnership with business. As businesses seek to achieve greater purpose alongside profit, there is a huge opportunity for the private and social sectors to work together and leverage each other's strengths.

The report states: "Businesses are a strikingly underused source of funding and skills for the charity sector across the UK and especially in Northern Ireland. It is particularly important to tap into this source given current pressures on other sources of funding, with public donations expected to be affected by the cost-of-living squeeze and economic downturn and government finances under strain. More charities should prioritise identifying and cultivating opportunities to tap into the business sector, with charity umbrella bodies supporting them to access opportunities to do this."

The Commission's report is a fine piece of work which was two years in the making. It should be seen as an important contribution to developing the sector.

# Publications

## NEW – Guide to help YOU on your journey

CYPSP have launched a new regional guide for parents on their journey through disability at the Long Gallery, Parliament Buildings on Monday 22 May 2023.

This resource is a product from the recommendations of the 'Our Journey Through Disability' Report and highlights the ongoing partnership work with parents, parent groups, children and young people and statutory, voluntary and community agencies.

This resource is by parents for parents and its development has been parent led from the onset and addresses the whole life journey for parents of



children with disability and additional needs. Launched alongside this document, is the 'All About ME' booklet co-designed by Barnardo's PosAbility Young Peoples' Group.

This is a live resource which will be updated as new resources emerge.

Officially launching the Guide, we would like to thank Robbie Butler, MLA along with Oscar and BAFTA winner James Martin and his father Ivan who added some star quality to the launch with warm, witty endorsements and more importantly, encouraging progress on inclusion in Northern Ireland. Finally a huge thank you to the parents and young people and Chris Scott from Education Authority who presented on the day – you were all amazing.

We encourage you to share this resource widely to enable us to reach as many parents as possible.

Download a copy of the resource at: <https://tinyurl.com/YourJourneyGuide>

## Live Here Love Here is Northern Ireland's largest civic pride programme



It's about loving where you live... and feeling empowered to take positive environmental action. Examples include: creating a community vegetable patch, organising a beach clean, or starting up a tool swap scheme.

Create your profile [here](#) and join us in doing something positive for your community today.

Sign up for the e-bulletin here; [Live Here Love Here - Show your support](#)

## Scope<sup>NI</sup>

Available online, includes a series of important articles on a range of matters including including the way forward for the third sector, self-harm, the cost of living, the Budget, segregation, inflation and public finances; Scope can be accessed at; <http://scopeni.nicva.org/>



The Environmental news bulletin is available at [ENRA-March-2023.pdf \(nienvironmentlink.org\)](#). For other NIEL publications and events, go to; [www.nienvironmentlink.org](http://www.nienvironmentlink.org)





Please click the link below to access the latest news-letter for PCSPs which highlights local events and initiatives; [PCSP Projects coming to Life | Policing and Community Safety Partnerships \(pcsp.org\)](https://www.pcsp.org)



RCN produces a range of publications including Rural Brief, a regular update of news and views affecting rural communities as well as Consultation Responses and Policy updates. A range of RCN publications is available at [Publications Archive - Rural Community Network](#)



Catch up on what's been happening at the Board in [Policing Matters Issue 31: March 2023 \(nipolicingboard.org.uk\)](#) and the Chief Constable's Report to the Policing Board March 2023 is available at; [chief-constables-report-to-the-northern-ireland-policing-board.pdf \(nipolicingboard.org.uk\)](#)

## Northern Ireland Central Investment Fund for Charities Conflict of Interest Policy with the Charities Commission

All charities under the law of Northern Ireland are required to register with and be regulated by the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland (CCNI). There are no exemptions to this requirement.



These arrangements apply to the Department for Communities (DfC) in respect of those charities for which DfC is the charity trustee.

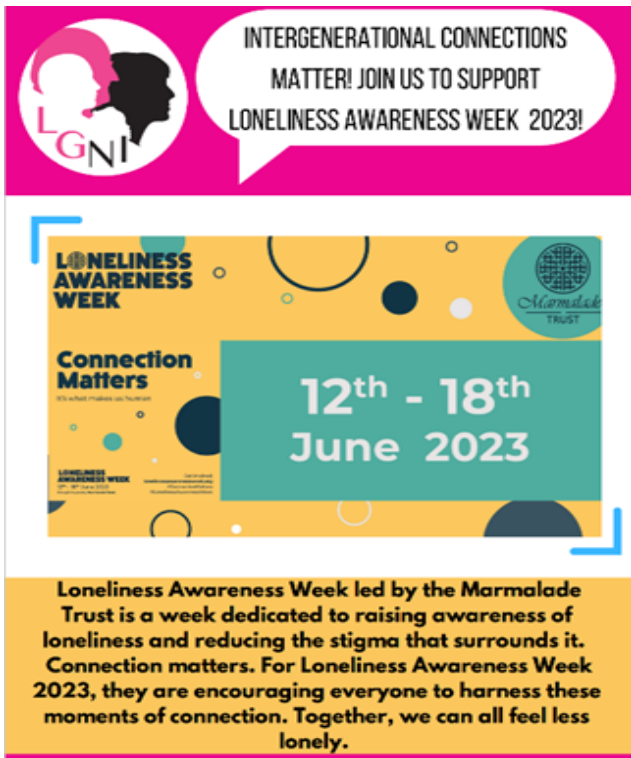
The purpose of this document is to set out the procedures to be followed by DfC where any concern/issue is raised and does not obviate the need for any charity for which DfC is the charity trustee to adhere to the requirements of the Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2008 (the 2008 Act) or any subordinate legislation emanating from it.

The aim of this arrangement is to protect DfC and CCNI from any appearance of impropriety.

[Northern Ireland Central Investment Fund for Charities Conflict of Interest Policy with the Charities Commission Northern Ireland | Department for Communities \(communities-ni.gov.uk\)](#)



# Events



INTERGENERATIONAL CONNECTIONS MATTER! JOIN US TO SUPPORT LONELINESS AWARENESS WEEK 2023!

**LONELINESS AWARENESS WEEK**  
**Connection Matters**  
**12th - 18th June 2023**

Loneliness Awareness Week led by the Marmalade Trust is a week dedicated to raising awareness of loneliness and reducing the stigma that surrounds it. Connection matters. For Loneliness Awareness Week 2023, they are encouraging everyone to harness these moments of connection. Together, we can all feel less lonely.



**LONELINESS AWARENESS WEEK**  
**ACTIVITY IDEAS!**

Activity ideas to connect people of all ages and stages in life. To enjoy spending time together, learn, share skills and knowledge and have fun!

- ▶ **Have a Get Together:** talk, sing, enjoy arts & crafts, make **fruit skewers**, smoothies and dips, decorate cupcakes etc.
- ▶ **'Spring into Summer':** enjoy activities together in the great outdoors – good for health and wellbeing. You can download the **'Spring into Summer'** ideas from our website resources section.
- ▶ **All Ages April Inspiration:** Check out what took place as part of **All Ages April 2022**
- ▶ **'Pots of Kindness':** plant up to share – flower and vegetable seeds, herbs. Download the **'growing pots of kindness'** resource. Start a sunflower growing competition between settings.
- ▶ **Plant & Share** by celebrating growing your own food and friendships in your community. There's more information on the **Food for Life Get Togethers** website.

For more information go to the website at;  
[Loneliness Awareness Week 2023 – Linking Generations NI](https://www.linkinggenerationsni.org.uk/)

## Supporting carers in Older People's Service Get involved in shaping alternative respite services using Direct Payments Focus Group

Thursday 22 June 2023 at 2pm– 4pm at Knockbreda Health and Wellbeing Centre, 110 Saintfield Road, Belfast, BT8 6GR

If you are a carer of someone who is in receipt of Older People Services from Belfast Trust and eligible for a carer assessment, we would like to invite you to a Focus Group. We would like to explore with carers how a Direct Payment, which is a payment made directly to the carer based on an assessed need, may be used to support carers to access respite services.

If you would like to get involved, please register your interest in attending at <https://forms.office.com/e/X8gkkpmdgg>. Carers will be reimbursed for out of pocket expenses including travel costs and replacement care if required.

For further information contact; Anne Murphy, Carer Involvement and Projects Officer  
E: [anne.murphy@belfasttrust.hscni.net](mailto:anne.murphy@belfasttrust.hscni.net)



# Law Centre NI's Refugee Week Lecture

## Vicky Tennant

UNHCR Representative to the UK

*Refugees and forced displacement:  
global trends, local impact*



**Register [here](#)**

Please note places are limited

**Thursday 22nd June  
11.30–13.00  
Belfast City Hall**



This year's lecture will be delivered in honour of  
**Ronnie Vellem**



You are invited to a special seminar to discuss 25 years of the good Friday/Belfast Agreement and the environment.

We will also be launching the final report commissioned by NIEL and the Irish Environmental Network and produced by the Environmental Justice Network Ireland, "Linking the Irish Environment" and recommendations on improving north/south cooperation on the environment.

For more information and to register, click here: [Linking the Irish Environment: Report Launch and Special Seminar Tickets, Wed 21 Jun 2023 at 11:00 | Eventbrite](#)

## All-Ireland Tenant Engagement Conference Update

**The All-Ireland Tenant Engagement Conference is sold out!**

We are delighted with the interest shown in this event from tenants, social housing and community development professionals and we are looking forward to a great day on 13 June!

If you aren't joining us in person on the day, please follow us on social media to get updates on what's happening and join in the fun with the hashtag #NextLevelTP.

The [programme](#) will showcase involved tenants, leading housing professionals, and policymakers who care about tenant involvement from across the island of Ireland. We'll learn what works, what doesn't, and how we can all help take tenant participation to the next level.

**SOLD OUT**

**TICKETS LEFT!**

TO THE ALL-IRELAND TENANT  
ENGAGEMENT CONFERENCE!

**Supporting  
Communities**  
Empowering Society



# Training

## HCN Online Forums Digital Drop-In Sessions

Are you a member of the [Housing Community Network](#)?

If you attend Central, Area, Regional, District Level meetings or Inter-Agencies, you will soon have access to all of your forum resources online!

Carla Mullholand, our new digital inclusion officer, will be holding regular drop-in sessions on Thursday afternoons from 1.30pm - 2.30pm to help members get signed up and use the online forums.

Not to be confused with the tenant portal, where you can manage aspects of your tenancy by signing in on the Housing Executive website, the collaboration portal or 'HCN Online Forums' are designed to create a simple online environment for sharing files, online chat, discussions, managing meetings and associated papers and assigning tasks or 'to-do' lists.

The online forums will improve the network's ability to collaborate by removing the need to email papers, minutes, and meeting invitations which individuals can quickly lose. Instead, all the forum's documents and discussions will be stored in an organised way online where members can access them whenever needed. Read more [about Carla and her new role](#) in assisting the HCN to gain the digital skills needed to participate online.

### Register for these session

These session will be held on Zoom. To register for any of these sessions, please [fill in this form](#).

If you have any questions, contact Carla Mullholand at [carla@supportingcommunities.org](mailto:carla@supportingcommunities.org).



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## Volunteer Now Training Sessions in May / June 2023

### Keeping Children Safe: An Introduction

**Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> July 2023 from 10.00am - 1.00pm**  
**Online standard course from £20**



*This is a half day basic awareness course for those working with children and young people.*

Keeping Children Safe Training is delivered by accredited trainers with experience of safeguarding issues.

Participants receive a certificate on completion of the full course.

This course covers:

- legal and policy context of safeguarding children;
- what abuse is and what we know about abuse;
- procedures for reporting concerns; and
- relevance of code of behaviour for staff/volunteers e.g. e-safety issues.

*Places are allocated on a first come, first served basis and are limited to a maximum of 3 per organisation.*

Joining information will be sent out 24 hours before the session.

Volunteer Now courses are booking up fast, especially the safeguarding courses so be quick! If you don't see what you are looking for, please drop us an email ([training@volunteernow.co.uk](mailto:training@volunteernow.co.uk)) and let us know, we might add it to the calendar! And don't forget, we also offer tailored training.

Find out more and book your places here – <https://www.volunteernow.co.uk/training/courses-scheduled/>



## Housing Rights Training

### Changes to renting privately in NI - Landlord Advice Information Session

Online

Date; Monday 19th June 2023 at 10.00am



Fees; Voluntary / Community from £48.00 to £60.00  
Public / Statutory from £60.00 to £75.00

This course will inform participants of regulations and changes to the Private Tenancies Act which were implemented on 1st April 2023.

For more information on Housing Rights Training, courses and seminars, go to; [Housing Rights Training](#)

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### Supporting Communities Training

## Reporting to the Charity Commission NI - Lunchtime Special Training (Online Session) Friday 16th June 2023 from 12 noon to 12.30 pm

How would you rate your understanding of the reporting requirements for the Charity Commission NI?

Get a better understanding of the reporting guidelines and learn what you need to prepare for your annual report.

Whether you need a quick refresher or just want a peek at the topic before committing to a longer course, our lunchtime taster sessions are perfect for you! In just 30 minutes over your break, you can catch up on this important topic and be confident that your group's governance is getting a look in!

Grab a bite and meet us online at 12 noon.

### Register your place

This session will be held on Zoom. To register, [please fill in this form](#).

If you have any questions, contact Aidan Kearney by email at [aidan@supportingcommunities.org](mailto:aidan@supportingcommunities.org).

**Please note, this session is designed for community groups in Northern Ireland.**



## Understanding 'Social Value'? (Online Session) Wednesday 21st June 2023 from 10.00 am to 11.00 am

Join us online to get a better understanding of what we mean when we talk about 'Social Value' and 'Impact Measurement'.

This session will help you to:

- Recognise the importance of measuring your social value
- Understand the jargon associated with impact measurement
- Learn about the tools available to use to measure your impact

### Register your place

This session will be held on Zoom. To register, [please fill in this form](#).

**Please note, this session is designed for community groups in Northern Ireland.**

# Funding

## Micro Community Investment Fund

### Fund Aims

The fund will provide valuable investment for community initiatives making a difference in towns and villages across Northern Ireland.

The fund will enable those organisations who are making the lives of others in their communities better, by improving their financial, physical, and mental wellbeing.

### Criteria

You do not have to have a constitution to apply to this fund. We will discuss your project with you in advance of application if you do not have certain governance requirements for funding in place.

We want to support smaller, grassroots organisations delivering great work. For this reason, whilst groups with an income of up to £30,000 per annum are eligible to apply preference will be given to groups with an income of up to £10,000.

### Community Investments available: Up to £2,000

Applications are sought to support both new and existing activities and projects that enhance the financial, physical and/or mental well being of people in communities. We will support new or existing community initiatives that have a particular focus on addressing the challenges people are facing around the rising cost of living.

Community projects should focus on improving at least one of the following:

- Financial wellbeing
- Physical wellbeing
- Mental wellbeing

### Applications for funding within one or other of these themes could be to support:

- Projects promoting inclusion and belonging, particularly to enhance the physical and mental well being of the local community
- Projects that strengthen the capacity of individuals

to engage with a range of available digital services in order to help manage their money in a digital age

- Projects that enhance people's financial knowledge through financial education programmes
- Projects promoting physical activity which uses the assets located within the area
- Projects that improve the ability of individuals to access mental health and wellbeing services either i) directly, through the provision of support or ii) indirectly, through education/awareness raising programmes
- Projects that encourage the active participation of individuals in their own mental wellbeing. Projects should aim to promote increased independence/resilience in relation to an individual's mental health

### We want to prioritise projects that:

- Focus on the positive contribution of people within the community and support the challenges that people face in light of the rising cost of living
- Enable active participation of a community in decision-making and involvement in making their community a better place to live in
- Focus on the assets within the community which the project will use to make the community a better place to live in
- Help get people engaged in taking community action where it hasn't happened before to make the community a better place to live in.
- Projects that address more than one particular strand of wellbeing

For more information and to apply, please visit [Micro Community Investment Fund - Community Foundation Northern Ireland \(communityfoundationni.org\)](https://communityfoundationni.org)



## The Cooper Richardson Fund

### Introduction

Jack Cooper and his son-in-law Paul Richardson both died in 2022. This fund was set up by their family to honour Jack and Paul and the generous nature that they shared. They also shared a love of sport.

Jack was a talented footballer and badminton player. Paul was a competitive swimmer and water polo player.

As well as sports, the fund will also focus on the arts, especially music, which brought joy to Paul.

The fund will continue Jack's lifelong connection with his home of Dundonald, and an interest in local history, which he passed on to his daughter Karolyn.

The Community Foundation is delighted to manage this fund on behalf of the Cooper and Richardson Families.

### Size of Grant:

Applicants can apply for a grant ranging from £1,000 to £2,000.

### Fund Criteria:

The first round of funding will initially support constituted organisations with funding for capital equipment that enables sporting activity.

### The Fund for this round has four main aims:

- To improve access to sport and physical activity, with a particular focus on supporting facilities in areas of economic need and for those most isolated in communities
- To improve the health and well-being of people in Northern Ireland
- To provide funding for resources, including equipment for small organisations, who may have limited access to funding opportunities
- To remove barriers for getting things done in communities

\*Applicants must outline how their application meets at least **one** of the above aims, however, in the event of a high level of demand we will prioritise projects that meet more than one of these aims.

### What can the fund support?

In the interests of being a flexible and responsive funder, the fund will focus on providing support for capital equipment that enables sporting activity and reduces isolation of people.

- General sporting equipment – to enable and encourage physical activity, with a particular focus on those most isolated of any age, including older people.
- Additional equipment – to enable the expansion of activity or a safer environment for delivery of the activity providing that the equipment will enable the delivery of sport and physical activity.
- Minor facility amendments – to enable better accessibility to facilities for delivery of sport and physical activities – \*any statutory permissions, if appropriate, will need to be in place and evidenced at the time of application.



Applications should explain why there's a need for the project and how end users have been involved in developing the project.

Applications should consider how the project adds value to services currently available in your local community, and work collaboratively with other groups to maximise the impact of the project, where possible.

Projects must have their funding spent within 12 months from the date of a letter of offer.

### Who can apply?

- Constituted organisations, including sports clubs with charitable purposes with income levels of £30,000 or below.
- Applicants must be based in Northern Ireland and applying to support projects and beneficiaries from Northern Ireland only.

We will prioritise small, locally based organisations, that find it difficult to access funding from other sources.

We are particularly interested in funding across the whole of Northern Ireland, and so in the event of a high demand for this funding, we will prioritise allocating funding across all Local Authority areas in Northern Ireland.

Closing date is 18th June 2023 at 1pm. To apply please visit [The Cooper Richardson Fund - Community Foundation Northern Ireland \(communityfoundationni.org\)](https://communityfoundationni.org)



## Kits 4 Kids Grants

Applications for Kits 4 Kids grants are now open until 17:00 on Tuesday 13th June 2023.

Before applying, please make sure your organisation/team meets the stated criteria.

We'll let you know that your application has been successful by 31st July 2023. Due to the high volume of applications received, I'm afraid we can't provide feedback on individual applications.

Funding is only available to organisations based in the UK who have not previously received support from the Poundland Foundation;

- Applications are not eligible from profit-making organisations or schools: registered charities, community interest companies (CICs) and unregistered organisations can apply
- Groups must work with children under 18
- Grant to be spent on kit only (clothing) and clubs/teams/organisations must agree to display the Poundland Foundation logo on their kit



- Organisations must have an income of under £10,000 and hold reserves under £5,000 (we may ask for proof of this, so please provide accurate figures)
- Organisations must have a safeguarding and/or child protection policy that can be uploaded as part of the application process
- Organisations must have their own bank account and be able to submit proof of the account name, sort code and account number (unfortunately grants cannot be transferred to personal accounts)

For more information and to apply, please visit [Apply for Support | Poundland Foundation](#)

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## Inclusive Communities: The Phoenix Green Community Fund

Environmental Responsibility is one of the core pillars of our Responsible Business Strategy. Just as we aim to act as an environmentally responsible business by supporting biodiversity projects and initiatives within the communities that we serve, we also continue to provide a low carbon solution to homes and businesses, supporting zero carbon targets.



In 2023, we're utilising the Green Community Fund to support community groups and organisations across our licence area with funding to help them deliver activity that helps to improve our environment and tackling the climate crisis in some way, no matter how big or small.

The Green Community Fund is currently open, with applications reviewed and funding awarded on a monthly basis. Full information on the Green Community Fund, including Terms and Conditions is available at the [Green Community Fund](#) page.

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## Kingspan Kickstart Sports Fund

Amateur athletes and sports clubs across the island of Ireland are invited to apply for the Kingspan Kickstart Sports Fund, a fund created to help budding athletes get a financial boost to achieve their goals. Already committed to elevating and developing sports across Ireland through various sponsorships, including Ulster Rugby and Cavan GAA, we are also keen to provide a launch pad for grassroots level athletes, sports clubs and community sports facilities. The fund, which has Shane Lowry as ambassador, will run on a quarterly basis, and offer up to 1,000 euro / 850 sterling, per applicant, per year to help provide financial support for equipment, training, and other necessary resources.



For more information and to apply, please visit [Kickstart Sports Fund | Kingspan Group](#)





## Resilience Grants

The National Archives' Resilience Grants programme has been designed to support archives to be adaptable, resilient and sustainable, creating lasting solutions that enable them to respond to change, and contribute to communities and the economy.

Archives Resilience projects could include (but are not limited to):

- proposals that would lead to increased organisational stability, including long-term organisational, financial and strategic planning
- increased staffing capacity and enhanced skills
- reduced costs
- increased income
- improving capacity to develop, care for and enrich collections, physically and digitally
- ensuring that collections are safely preserved, including digitally
- work on diversity, equity and inclusion
- responses to climate change, such as developing energy-efficiency within an archives service.

Each applicant is likely to have different needs and approaches to building organisational resilience. To help organisations tailor their proposals to their own challenges and opportunities, we ask that applicants make use of the Archives and Record Association's [Archives Service Resilience Indicator](#)

[Tool](#), which is designed to provide archive services with a quick methodology for assessing resilience, and identifying gaps or areas for development.

You may also wish to investigate [Archive Service Accreditation](#), the UK standard for good practice across archives services. A Resilience Grant and/or the Resilience Indicator Tool could be used as preparatory actions for an Accreditation application, and have been designed using the same standards and frameworks. You can download the [Archives Sector Resilience Indicator](#) and [guidance notes](#) from the Archives and Records Association.

To apply for a Resilience Grant, please [complete an online application form](#).

If you have any questions about Resilience Grants, please contact us via email: [archivegrants@nationalarchives.gov.uk](mailto:archivegrants@nationalarchives.gov.uk).



## The Henry Smith Charity - Holiday Grants for Children

The purpose of the Holiday Grants programme is to provide access to recreational trips or holidays for groups of children who experience disadvantage or who have disabilities. In particular we are interested in contributing to trips that would not take place without our funding.

Please note we have changed our approach to assessing safeguarding, please read the funding guidelines carefully and check our [Safeguarding](#) webpage to make sure your trip is eligible.

### Key grant details

Grant size: £500 – £2,750

Length: One-off short grants

Decision timescale: 6 weeks

Deadlines: Submission dates vary depending when trips or holidays take place

### Qualifying criteria

Please only apply for this grant if you meet the following criteria:

Location of work: UK only, with priority to the 20% most deprived areas

Funding covers: Short holidays and recreational trips

Organisation type: Schools, youth groups, not for profit organisations and charities

For more information and to apply, please visit [Holiday Grants for Children - The Henry Smith Charity](#)



## The Duke of Edinburgh's Award/ Joint Award Initiative

The Duke of Edinburgh's Award/ Joint Award Initiative is supporting organisations who are interested in offering young people the opportunity to take part in the Award through a funding package which aims to give organisations the resources and skills to be able to deliver the Award.

We are the world's leading youth achievement Award, giving 14-24 year olds the opportunity to take on their own challenges, follow their passions, make a difference in their communities, and discover talents they never knew they had. Each young person builds their own Award programme – picking their own activities for the 4 sections of the Award:

- Volunteering,
- Physical,
- Skills and
- Expedition (with an additional Residential section at Gold) – to achieve a Bronze, Silver, or Gold Award.

Gaisce – The Irish President's Award and The Duke of Edinburgh's Award work in partnership through the Joint Award Initiative (JAI) to offer Award participants in Northern Ireland a choice of recognition for their achievements. On completion of their Award programme, they can choose a Duke of Edinburgh's Award, a Gaisce – The President's Award or a Duke of Edinburgh's International Award certificate.

Eligible voluntary and community organisations which do not currently offer the Award programme can access up to £10,250 of grant funding combined with support from a dedicated member of staff to help set up, launch, and deliver the Award programme.

Eligibility criteria includes but is not limited to:

- Organisations must be a not for profit/Voluntary, Community or Social Enterprise (VCS) Organisation. Types of eligible VCS organisations would include:

- Charitable Companies, registered with Companies House and the Charity Commission.
  - Community organisations who are Companies Limited by Guarantee (CLG) with no share capital and are registered with Companies House.
  - Community Interest Companies (CICs) which are not conducted for private gain: any surplus or assets are used exclusively for the benefit of the community.
  - Organisations with other governance structures should contact us to discuss their eligibility.
- Organisations must not have delivered the Award within the last 6 months.
  - Organisations must have been established for at least one year.
  - Organisations must be incorporated and registered with Companies House.
  - Organisations must have appropriate minimum standards in place to adhere to DofE licencing requirements.
  - The organisation is willing/able to contribute towards the reduced DofE licence fee (Year 1 will be fully covered by the grant, and 50% in year 2).

For more information go to [Access Without Limits – community. Funding in Northern Ireland - The Duke of Edinburgh's Award \(dofe.org\)](https://www.dofe.org) or email Jim at [jim.peacock@dofe.org](mailto:jim.peacock@dofe.org).

If you are interested but don't currently meet eligibility criteria, please do get in touch to discuss how we could support young people in your organisation to take part in the Award.



## The Community Ownership Fund Round 3

The Community Ownership Fund launched an updated prospectus on 12 May 2023. They have made positive changes to the Fund for future bidding windows. Changes to the design of the programme and the eligibility requirements are informed by applicant feedback, stakeholder engagement, and lessons learned from previous rounds. These changes are explained in the updated Community Ownership Fund prospectus.

Round 3 Window 1 will open on 31 May 2023 and will close at 11:59am on 12 July 2023.

Development support is now available to applicants via the [My Community website](https://www.mycommunity.org).

myCommunity

The Community Ownership Fund expression of interest (EOI) is open for applications.

For more information, please visit [New levelling up and community investments - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)



## Community Relations / Cultural Diversity Scheme

If you are planning events for the forthcoming year, please feel free to [contact a member of our team](#) to discuss your proposals prior to submitting your application. We can give you advice on how to plan your work and to source additional funding, if required.

The scheme will continue to support a wide range of work and offer support and assistance whether you are a first-time applicant or have been supported in the past.

While we will be supporting projects through to 31 March 2024, **the closing date for all applications is 15 December 2023 at 4 PM.**

### CR/CD Funding Details

- All projects in receipt of CR/CD funding must be completed within this financial year.
- Grants are up to £10K maximum and for project costs only.
- Average grant is £2K – £5K.

### Aims of the CR/CD Scheme

The Community Relations Council, with the support of Government, has established a fund to spend each year on community relations projects. This funding is intended to help community/voluntary groups throughout Northern Ireland develop their capacity to engage in community relations work and to enhance the community relations potential of projects they undertake.



If you have any questions or would like to discuss a proposal prior to submitting an application please [contact a member of the Funding and Development Programme](#) or phone 028 9022 7500.

### T:BUC Requirement

Applicants are required to outline the outcome in Together: Building a United Community (T:BUC) to which the proposed project will contribute.

[Read more about the T:BUC strategy.](#)

### Eligibility Requirements

There are certain specific criteria you must adhere to when applying for funding:

[Read about the CD/CR scheme criteria.](#)

### Apply for the Scheme

Use the link below to apply:

[Apply now for CR/CD Scheme](#)

## Rural Engagement Arts Programme

The Arts Council of Northern Ireland is welcoming applications to the second round of the Rural Engagement Arts Programme (REAP), a funding scheme, funded through The National Lottery, which aims to increase access and participation in the arts in rural areas of Northern Ireland. Grants from £500 - £10,000 are available and applications must be made online on the Arts Council's website.

**Applications are open from Friday 5 May 2023 and will close at 12noon on 3 July 2023.**

The purpose of the Rural Engagement Arts Programme (REAP) is to provide an integrated, cohesive approach to the needs of local rural communities while recognising some specific issues they face.

The primary theme of REAP is combatting isolation and loneliness and promoting social inclusion. The recent pandemic adversely affected many lives as families and friends were separated for sustained periods of time, resulting in a negative impact on mental health and well-being. This was felt deeply in rural communities, characterised by smaller and more dispersed populations, where isolation can be more acute than in towns and urban areas.

There are a number of ways to differentiate between loneliness and social isolation:

- Loneliness can affect any age group; it is the subjective, unpleasant and distressing phenomenon stemming from a difference between an individual's desired and achieved level of social relationships.
- Social isolation is a forced isolation from normal social networks caused by loss of mobility or deteriorating health.

The impact that loneliness and social isolation can have on the physical, mental and social health of isolated older people is well documented. [The Campaign to End Loneliness \(opens in a new tab\)](#)

points to research which shows that lacking social connections is as damaging to health as smoking. Lonely individuals are more likely to visit their GP, use more medication and have a higher incidence of falls. They are also



## Community Relations / Cultural Diversity Scheme continued

more likely to enter residential or nursing care earlier. Participating in the arts, and coming together as communities, can make a vital contribution to improving health and wellbeing, building confidence and integrating communities. The Arts Council has worked with local authority community development and arts officers to ensure that information on REAP is available and that this public funding is as widely distributed as possible.

Groups can apply for one-off projects or for a programme of events. Projects do not have to be new - existing, successful programmes which meet the strategic themes of REAP, are also eligible for support.

**While engagement must be targeted at rural communities as defined here, Local Authorities and other groups based in urban areas may apply to fund programmes delivered in rural communities.** The definition of rural is outlined in Appendix 1 at the end of these guidance notes, page 12, and is taken from the [NISRA review of statistical classification and delineation of settlements in March 2015 \(opens in a new tab\)](#)

### Who can apply?

We welcome applications from the widest possible range of organisations. You will be required to provide proof that you have a legal constitution.

- Registered charities and other organisations which cannot distribute profits
- Groups of organisations working together to deliver specific projects
- Formally constituted parent-teacher associations
- Local Authorities
- Arts Organisations
- Organisations based in Republic of Ireland or based outside the UK and Northern Ireland, may be eligible to apply however, any proposed project must benefit people living in rural communities within Northern Ireland.
- Organisations currently in receipt of Arts Council grant funding (Annual Funding or National Lottery Project Funding) can apply providing they demonstrate that project costs are additional to any programme and administrative costs already funded under other grants.
- In exceptional circumstances, organisations based in Belfast who are partnering with other organisations to deliver REAP projects in rural areas may be eligible to apply.

Applications from single organisations are permissible but should demonstrate partnership working. Consortium applications demonstrating partnership working will be prioritised. Partnerships might include sector providers such as rural development organisations, older people's providers and agencies, arts organisations or Local Authorities. See the Arts Council's REAP [Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQs\)](#) for examples of good partnership working.

### How much can you apply for?

You can apply for an award between £500 and £10,000 for a project.

### What you can apply for?

You can apply for the following eligible costs, which are indicative and not limited to:

- Costs of artists and tutors (including fees, accommodation, travel and subsistence) However please note that subsistence costs are capped at £20 per day. Also, if you are applying for artists and/or tutor costs, you must supply the relevant CVs, biography, or history of artistic practice information
- Transport costs, including vehicle hire (for example this could be to transport participants to courses/ activities)
- Existing programmes which meet the criteria of the scheme are eligible – but only for activity which will not begin prior to issue of funding decision letters
- Materials
- Travel expenses within Northern Ireland – please note the Arts Council has a maximum allowance of 25.7p per mile. If applicants are partnering with organisations in border communities and the project would necessitate travel across the border, this additional travel is eligible within reason
- Equipment hire
- Volunteer expenses
- Venue hire for workshops, training, rehearsals and performance
- Publicity and marketing costs
- Evaluation costs
- Participation, education and outreach work in film and media
- Equipment costs to a maximum value of 50% of your requested amount
- Equipment items will only be considered if identified as essential within your project and where it is vital for its successful delivery. Arts Council will not fund equipment only projects. Contributions towards laptops or PCs will be up to a maximum of £1,200; and, towards tablets, up to £500

For more information and to apply, please visit [Rural Engagement Arts Programme | Arts Council NI \(artscouncil-ni.org\)](#)





## Funding Clinic Sessions

Tuesday 27th June 2023 from 10.00 am to 3.00 pm

This is a one-to-one funding support session for HCN members with Anita Doonan, Funding and Social Value Officer. You can meet by phone or video call, whatever you prefer.

Start thinking about your next projects by asking questions like:

- What funding to apply for
- How to structure your application and plan accurate budgets
- How to carry out a community survey
- How to prepare for action planning
- How to do pre and post-monitoring and evaluation of your project

### Book Your Place

Please [fill in this form](#) to request an appointment.

The funding clinic will run from 10 am - 3 pm with 30 min slots available for individuals or groups to discuss their funding needs one-to-one with our funding officer.

This service is free for HCN members. If you are interested in becoming a member of the [Housing Community Network](#), please get in touch!

